

Soldiers sway sentiment with aid

Story and photos by
Pfc. Debralee P. Crankshaw
11th Public Affairs Detachment

PARO KHEL, Afghanistan – Murphy's Law was in effect Friday with a flat tire, a wrong turn and rain, but even with these mishaps, the convoy still arrived for a surprise visit to aid an Afghan village.

After a week of planning, almost 20 vehicles and more than 100 soldiers made the trip to Paro Khel Friday for a Medical Civic Action Program and a humanitarian assistance drop.

"It was a spot we thought we might like to patrol, but we weren't sure how the people felt about America. We thought they were indifferent, but we weren't sure so we thought we'd do a MEDCAP to win their hearts and minds," said 1st Lt. Richard May,

See **MECAP**, Page 4



Maj. Robert Gauer, battalion surgeon, 3rd Battalion, 504th Parachute Infantry Regiment, Fort Bragg, N.C., plays with a child as he checks his lungs during the Medical Civic Action Program Friday.

Bamian PRT opens to a welcoming crowd



Bamian residents watch the festivities for the opening of the Provisional Reconstruction Team office in Bamian.

Story and photos by
Sgt. Valerie Dey-Bolejack
109th Mobile Affairs Detachment

BAMIAN, Afghanistan — "Thank you U.S., for opening the PRT office and the reconstruction of Bamian," Bamian Governor Ali Yar Sadat said to approximately 250 people during the ceremony to formally open the Bamian Provincial Reconstruction Team storefront office on Sunday.

The storefront in the Bamian bazaar gives the local population easy communication with the PRT. Civil Military Operations Center personnel serve as an information center for local people, who can tell the civil affairs teams about their needs and be directed to the proper agencies for help. In addition, they collect demographic data to pass on to the Civil Affairs Team-A, non-governmental organizations and other government organizations working in Bamian Province.

As the convoy from the PRT to the ceremony passed by,

See **PRT**, Page 5

World News (Compiled from CNN.com)

Increased flights in Iraq

WASHINGTON — U.S. and coalition warplanes have dramatically increased the number of missions they fly over southern Iraq, focusing on mobile missile systems being moved into the area, military officials told CNN Wednesday.

Officials said as many as 750 missions a day are now being flown by all types of aircraft, including fighters, refueling and reconnaissance aircraft. That number is about two to three times what had been the routine.

Military sources said the change is in response to the Iraqis moving mobile surface-to-surface missiles, mobile surface-to-air missiles, early warning radars and anti-ship missiles into the southern no-fly zone.

Those systems are being struck by coalition aircraft as soon as they are located through reconnaissance efforts, officials said, because of concerns the systems could be within range of U.S. troops in Kuwait.

Sources say the need to quickly attack Iraqi targets is the prime reason for the stepped-up activity.

The no-fly zones, designed to protect Kurds in northern Iraq and Shiites in the south from Saddam's regime, were established by the United States and Britain after the 1991 Gulf War. Iraqi officials insist the zones violate the country's sovereignty and territorial integrity and refuse to recognize them.

FBI warns of possible reprisals for al-Qaida arrest

WASHINGTON — The FBI Wednesday advised state and local law enforcement agencies that the apprehension of al-Qaida operations chief Khalid Shaikh Mohammed could prompt terrorist reprisals.

The FBI, in its weekly intelligence bulletin to police agencies, said it believes the capture of Mohammed deals "a severe long-term blow" to al-Qaida's ability to plan and carry out attacks against the United States. But officials worried about plans that may already be in the pipeline.

"In the short term, the apprehension may accelerate execution of any operational planning already under way, as operatives seek

to carry out attacks before the information obtained through Mohammed's capture can be used to undermine operational security," the FBI said.

But an FBI official told CNN that despite the concern expressed in the dispatch, authorities have no information indicating there is any specific or credible threat as a result of the capture.

Mohammed is suspected of masterminding the Sept. 11 attacks.

Interrogators are placing "all appropriate pressure" on Mohammed at an undisclosed location, U.S. officials have said.

Government sources have said Mohammed has not been particularly useful so far, but that he has begun to talk. Initially, the suspected terrorist limited his responses to recitations from the Koran, the Islamic holy book, the sources said.



Workers examine the wreckage

Hamas claims Haifa bombing

HAIFA, Israel — A suicide bomber set off a powerful explosion that destroyed a suburban bus in the northern Israeli port city of Haifa Wednesday, killing at least 15 Israelis and badly wounding at least 40, Israeli police said.

The militant group Hamas claimed responsibility for the attack.

Bus No. 37 was carrying many high school and college students when the blast went off on Mount Carmel in Haifa killing the attacker, Assistant Police Commander

Dani Kuffler said.

Three of the 15 who died perished en route to the hospital. Many of the wounded were in serious condition, authorities said.

Sources inside the Islamic fundamentalist group Hamas told CNN that its military wing, Izzedine al Qassam, was responsible.

Hamas spokesman Mahmoud a-Zahar lauded the attack.

"We are sending the clear message that the will of resistance will continue until the elimination of the occupation," a-Zahar said. "This is a clear message for the government that Israeli crimes, Israeli aggression will be answered by a well-effective resistance from the Palestinian side."

Hamas has been labeled by the U.S. State Department as a terrorist organization. Izzedine al Qassam has admitted responsibility for terrorist attacks against Israeli civilians as well as attacks against the Israeli military.

The (new) color of money

NEW YORK — The federal government will unveil a new \$20 bill that will introduce a predominant but subtle color into the background, marking the first time in modern history that a U.S. bill will feature a color other than green.

According to the Treasury Department, other changes will include new images of Andrew Jackson and the White House, as well as other adjustments that are being kept secret. The official unveiling will take place on March 27, with the new bill entering circulation in the fall.

The last redesign of American currency was in 1996, when a new \$100 bill was introduced with new features to thwart counterfeiters. A new \$50 came in 1997, followed by the \$20 in 1998 and new \$5 and \$10 notes in 2000.

New features on those notes included new ink that appeared black from one angle and green from another; a watermark, visible only when holding the bill up to the light; and a security strip that ran vertically through the bill. While these features also will be included on the new redesigned bills, they may not fix the problem of counterfeiting.

Critter of the Week:

Scorpion

By Capt. Cory Campora
791st Preventive Medicine Detachment

There are approximately 1,500 described species of scorpions in the world. The good news is less than 25 species, all from the family Buthidae, possess venom that is life threatening to humans. The bad news is most scorpions found in Afghanistan belong to this family and have quite strong venoms. At least two species in Afghanistan and Pakistan inflict stings requiring medical attention (*Androctonus amoreuxi* and *Mesobuthus eupeus*), but most of these critters just inject venom which causes a lot of pain and localized effects around the sting area. All stings should be considered potentially dangerous, however, since identifying the different species can be difficult. Scorpions are encountered more during the warmer months of March to October and are active at night. Scorpions use their sting to capture prey and the venom sacs are controlled voluntarily, so they can regulate how much venom is injected into their victims. During the daytime, scorpions hide beneath stones, logs or bark, loose earth or among manmade objects. In dwellings, scorpions frequently rest in shoes or clothing, consequently, common places where stings are encountered by military personnel include the boots and under or around piled clothing. Scorpions can sting multiple times, and when trapped, as with a person in a sleeping bag, will readily do so as long as the victim is active. To prevent scorpion stings, military personnel should empty boots before putting them on, carefully inspect clothing left on the ground before putting it on, and keep sleeping bags tightly rolled when not in use.

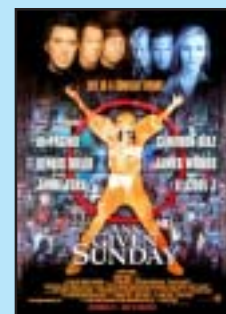


The African fat tail scorpion.

Bagram Air Base MWR presents

1530Z at the MWR building: "Any Given Sunday." A star quarterback gets knocked out of the game and an unknown third stringer is called in to replace him. The unknown gives a stunning performance and forces the aging coach to reevaluate his game plans and life. A new co-owner/president adds to the pressure of winning.

Tomorrow's movie will be "Young Guns."



Local weather

TWO-DAY REGIONAL WEATHER FORECAST:

	<i>Today</i>	<i>Friday</i>
Bagram:	Dust H: 54F L: 28F	Dust H: 63F L: 27F
Kandahar:	Clear H: 63F L: 34F	Dust H: 70F L: 39F
Kabul:	Haze H: 50F L: 27F	Haze H: 54F L: 32F
Uzbekistan:	Partly cloudy H: 56F L: 26F	Isolated showers H: 59F L: 33F

Weather forecast courtesy of the Bagram Combat Weather Team

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Maj. Robert Gauer, battalion surgeon, 3rd Battalion, 504th Parachute Infantry Regiment, Fort Bragg, N.C., checks a malnourished child during the Medical Civic Action Program Friday.

MEDCAP, from Page 1

medical platoon leader, 3rd Battalion, 504th Parachute Infantry Regiment, Fort Bragg, N.C.

Originally, the plan was to set up four lanes for treatment, divided by engineer tape, so the patients would know which doctor to see, and to find a private place for the women to be seen by a female nurse.

A building was offered for this purpose, but the nurse noticed the children would stay near their mothers. One of the lanes moved near the building specifically for pediatric care.

The lanes began with a medic triage, then the doctor would see them, assisted by another medic.

Finally, the patient proceeded to outprocessing for medication and received an "X" on their hand so medics and doctors knew who had already been treated.

"The medics did a great job," said Capt. Jason Enyart, commander, Company C, 3-504.

According to May, the most common symptoms the medics treated included sore throats, chronic back pain and old injuries that healed poorly causing arthritis and other pain. Other injuries included a dog bite, fevers and infections.

"Their way of life and their environment is hard on their bodies. They need continu-

ous care. We can't provide follow-up care, but we do what we can," said May. "All I want to do is help these people. They are hurting."

After the Paro Khel villagers were treated, a humanitarian assistance drop was made which included Halal meals (meals without pork), sewing kits, first aid kits, blankets, tools, nails, building supplies, school supplies and clothing.

These items were gathered in the last six months from Americans, soldiers and non-profit organizations.

According to Spc. Jay Gerson, civil affairs specialist, 450th Civil Affairs Bn. (Airborne), Riverdale, Md., the villagers had voiced an interest in having a school, so the soldiers tried to accommodate them by giving them the materials to build one.

"Actions speak louder than words. The medical assistance we're giving them, the food we're giving them – I think it proves our intentions are good," said Gerson.

Enyart believes missions like this are beneficial to the soldiers, as well as the Afghan people.

"We came here to make a difference and you see them suffering, you see them helped and you feel like you are actually doing something," he said.

This mission was very important for swaying the Afghan opinion of Americans.



Maj. George Smith, general surgeon, 909th Forward Surgical Team, Chicago, checks a man complaining of stomach pain.

According to Enyart, without them, the soldiers could never leave.

"The bottom line is we are trying to chase around the enemy and kill the bad guys, but there is no way we can do that. What we have to do is get local people in the towns to realize they're the ones who are going to stop them.

"If they don't let the bad guys stay in their towns and buy food, or if whenever they do, they tell the local government or us then they will shut down the enemy," said Enyart.

Missions like this are important because they inform Afghans of the U.S. forces' intentions here.

"This mission is important to show the United States forces, as well as the government, want to help the people and to show them we are not here to hurt. We want to stabilize the country and make Afghanistan a better place," said May.

Gerson agrees.

"The only information they get is from misinformed people or the hostile forces. We've had some incredible stories," said Gerson. "We've come and given people help and they have left, literally, with tears in their eyes saying, 'I thought Americans were bad people.'"

PRT, from Page 1

the Afghan Military Force lined the route, standing at attention, saluting each vehicle.

The local police force provided traffic control and blocked traffic along the route. The police and the AMF had worked with an Operational Detachment-A element to coordinate security.

Guests and military members were surprised by large handmade green banners welcoming the PRT that said, "We are thankful (sic) and appreciate from people and government of USA," and one saying, "We are very happy from opening the provisional office for privately (sic) and military operation center of American Forces in B (Bamian)."

The opening of the second PRT in Afghanistan was conducted despite weather conditions that prevented the attendance of the American ambassador and other dignitaries.

Sadat said he is very happy that the United States is here to help the people of Bamian.

"Now Bamian has the best security of any district in Afghanistan," he added.

The AMF 34th Division commander, General Jawhari, said his troops were pleased to be working with U.S. soldiers and learning from them.

He talked about the help of the U.S. to free Bamian, which wouldn't have happened without the U.S. military and thanked the US for their presence here.

He said that he liked working with the U.S. military and coalition and wanted to strengthen the relationship in



Maj. Mitchell Shaffer, Bamian Civil Military Operations Center commander, and Bamian Governor Ali Yar Sadat cut the ribbon to officially open the PRT storefront.

the future.

General Tofan, AMF 34th deputy general, said for 200 years the government has ignored Bamian and he is looking forward to the UN, the U.S. and the NGOs helping the province.

He also talked about his support for the Afghan National Army and said that 450 of his soldiers had joined the ANA.

Lt. Col. Michael Stout, deputy commander of Coalition Joint Civil-Military Operations Task Force for Operations, spoke on behalf of the U.S. government.

He noted that nearly two years after the Taliban had destroyed the famous Bamian Buddha statues, the PRTs were conceived to help with the reconstruction of the province.

Sadat and Maj. Mitchell Shaffer, Bamian CMOC commander, cut the ribbons across the door to the storefront and unveiled the sign above the door, formally opening the office.

After the ceremony, traditional refreshments were served while a local singing group, Michid, sang three

songs written especially for the occasion.

The Bamian Province is northeast of Kabul and rich in history.

It was a major stop of the Silk Route between China and Europe. Genghis Khan occupied the Citadel in Bamian during his reign.

During the 4th and 5th centuries, the two large Buddhas

were carved out of the mountainside and were considered one of the great wonders of the ancient world.

The Taliban had tanks fire at the massive statues and destroyed them with explosives. The province has requested that the Buddhas be rebuilt. In addition to destroying their historical artifacts, the Taliban persecuted the predominately Hazari population during its regime, committing mass murders and destroying villages and schools.

The Hazari of the province have welcomed the U.S. military and the PRT and offered any possible assistance to the soldiers.

Even though the storefront didn't formally open until Sunday's celebration, residents and local authorities dropped by during the construction of the office over the last few weeks to offer their support.



U.S. Army photo

Hot seat...

U.S. soldiers responded to a threat in the vicinity of Khowst Tuesday. They found an improvised explosive device under the seat of a motorcycle. The device, made from two anti tank mines, was designed to detonate by radio. The device was dismantled and there were no injuries.



Coalition Sports Zone

(Compiled from ESPN.com)

Slow, steady will win the playoff race

ESPN — Have you ever watched a turtle race? No? Well, I guess you never spent any time with an old friend of mine down at the Jersey shore. He spent many a summer weekend watching those hard shelled-creatures deliberately make their way to the finish line. Of course, the drawn-out nature of the contest gave my pal several hours to guzzle beer. See, there can be good in anything, if you look for it.

Right now, the race for the final playoff spots in both conferences reminds me of those turtles. Slowly, painfully, teams are struggling for the finish line. They're all desperate to win those precious playoff berths, which could be worth a couple of million at the box office. After that, they're hoping for an act of God or a hot goalie.

On Tuesday, both current eighth-place clubs took a long overdue step forward. In the East, the Bruins snapped their nine-game winless streak by beating the Carolina Drizzle (formally known as the much more imposing Hurricanes), 4-2, in Raleigh. Out West, the Oilers put an end to a similar nine-game winless skid, sinking the Sharks, 2-1.

With approximately one month left on the regular season schedule, the turtles are cautiously moving down the stretch. Here's a look at each of the clubs in the hunt for the final playoff spots in each conference.

All records and stats through March 4.

Eastern Conference

Washington Capitals (32-25-7-4, 75 points, 14 games remaining): Believe it or not, the Southeast Division-leading Caps still have a long way to go to assure a spot in the postseason. If they win the division, they'll capture the third seed and home-ice advantage in the first round.

Tampa Bay Lightning (29-22-10-5, 73 points, 16 games remaining): They're trying to be like last year's Islanders. A surprisingly good start, followed by a long mediocre stretch, followed by a strong stretch run.

New York Islanders (30-25-9-2, 71 points, 16 games remaining): They face a killer schedule down the stretch. They have a six-game road trip that takes them from Vancouver to Montreal and is sandwiched between a pair of home games against New Jersey.

Boston Bruins (29-26-8-3, 69 points, 16 games remaining): The slumping Bruins are in the midst of a stretch

where they play five games in seven days (ridiculous) and eight games in 13 days. After that, they go cross-country to play the Coyotes, Sharks and Kings.



Tampa's Vincent Lecavalier has yet to play an NHL playoff game.

New York Rangers (27-31-9-2, 65 points, 13 games remaining): The Broadway Bankers are hot, but is it too late? Since Alexei Kovalev arrived from Pittsburgh via a Brink's Truck and Brian Leetch and Pavel Bure returned from injury, the Rangers have been a different team.

Montreal Canadiens (24-27-8-7, 63 points, 16 games remaining): The Canadiens open a six-game trip across the USA in Anaheim on Wednesday. If they're still in the

race when they return home, they'll have five straight home games against conference foes.

Western Conference

Anaheim Mighty Ducks (31-24-8-4, 74 points, 15 games remaining): They play nine of their final 15 games on home ice, where they have a strong 16-9-6-1 record. Under new coach Mike Babcock, the Ducks have played in a league-high 40 one-goals games and have

See **SPORTS**, Page 7



2002 National Hockey League standings

Eastern Conference

Atlantic	
(2) New Jersey	64 pts
(5) Philadelphia	64 pts
N.Y. Islanders	65 pts
N.Y. Rangers	69 pts
Pittsburgh	66 pts
Northeast	
(4) Ottawa	66 pts
(6) Toronto	66 pts
(1) Boston	65 pts
(7) Montreal	66 pts
Buffalo	64 pts
Southeast	
Washington	67 pts
(8) Tampa Bay	65 pts
Florida	66 pts
Atlanta	64 pts
(3) Carolina	66 pts

Western Conference

Central	
(2) Detroit	65 pts
(5) St. Louis	65 pts
Nashville	64 pts
Chicago	66 pts
Columbus	65 pts
Northwest	
(1) Vancouver	66 pts
(8) Colorado	65 pts
(4) Minnesota	64 pts
(6) Edmonton	65 pts
Calgary	65 pts
Pacific	
(3) Dallas	66 pts
(7) Anaheim	66 pts
Los Angeles	65 pts
Phoenix	64 pts
San Jose	64 pts

SPORTS, from Page 6

lost just eight of them. In other words, these Ducks like a close game.

Edmonton Oilers (27-23-8-8, 70 points, 16 games remaining): The health of forward Ryan Smyth (shoulder), defenseman Jason Smith (shoulder) and goalie Tommy Salo (groin) will play a big part in determining whether or not the Oilers can hang on to a playoff spot.

Nashville Predators (26-25-9-5, 66 points, 17 games remaining): The organization showed a willingness to spend a little extra cash by acquiring Oleg Petrov from Montreal on Monday. The speedy little forward makes \$1.2 million and is under contract through next season.

Los Angeles Kings (28-30-4-4, 64 points, 16 games remaining): The Kings playoff hopes were dealt a severe blow on Tuesday when they dropped a 2-1 decision to the Ducks at the Staples Center. The Kings lost the game (and the point) in the final three minutes on a fluke goal by Samuel Pahlsson. Now, L.A. must beat visiting Edmonton to keep their injury-riddled season alive on Thursday.

Phoenix Coyotes (26-27-8-4, 64 points, 17 games remaining): Several league sources say the Coyotes have serious money issues. That would lead you to believe they'd like to sell off some of their higher-priced players, like goalie Sean Burke and defenseman Teppo Numminen.

So, there are your turtles. Sorry, I just couldn't include the Panthers or the Blackhawks. I figure those creatures are just too far behind the pack to make a run in their present condition.

Who's going to grab the lucky spots? Great question. With these clubs, it might take a while to decide.

Sharks send Nolan to Maple Leafs

TORONTO — The Toronto Maple Leafs acquired forward Owen Nolan from the San Jose Sharks on Wednesday night.

Headed to the Sharks are center Alyn McCauley, center Brad Boyes and a first-round draft pick.

"It's obviously a big deal," said Bill Watters, assistant to Leafs general manager Pat Quinn. "I want to leave the rest to Pat Quinn to discuss."

Nolan, the Sharks' captain, has 22 goals, 20 assists and 91 penalty minutes in 61 games this year. In 836 career games, the powerful forward has 323 goals, 352 assists and 1,474 penalty minutes.

McCauley has six goals and nine assists in 64 games for the Leafs this season. He has 33 goals and 49 assists in 304 career NHL games.

Boyes was the Leafs' first choice, 24th overall, in the 2000 draft.

Nolan was one of the most sought players as the March 11 NHL trade deadline approaches. By dealing him, the Sharks appear to have given up on chasing a playoff spot. They are 11 points behind eighth-place Edmonton in the Western Conference.

For the Leafs, getting Nolan is the type of big deal their fans have been clamoring for. Although he's having a mediocre year, he's considered among the elite power forwards in the game.

Quinn also got to see Nolan firsthand during the Salt Lake City Olympics, when he coached the 31-year-old winger as Canada won the gold medal.

Lemieux's eye on next season

PITTSBURGH — Pittsburgh Penguins owner-player Mario Lemieux is warning he intends to closely monitor his teammates and the coaches over the final month of the season.

The Penguins, all but out of the Eastern Conference playoff race, take a six-game losing streak into Thursday night's home game against Carolina. The late-season slide apparently is too reminiscent to Lemieux of a 10-game winless streak (0-8-1-1) that ended last season, when the Penguins won only two of their final 17.

Lemieux usually defers personnel decisions to general manager Craig Patrick — at least publicly — but he made it known he will be involved in deciding whether coach Rick Kehoe returns.

Kehoe, who has one more season left on a contract that pays him \$350,000 a season, is about to become the first Penguins coach since Bob Berry in 1987-88 to miss the playoffs in consecutive seasons.

"Obviously, on the hockey side, it's up to Craig to make the right moves," Lemieux said. "But I'm also going to have a say in it and sit down at the end of the year and see where the franchise is going, and we'll go from there. The last month of the season, I'm sure Craig is evaluating the coaching staff and the players and everyone in the organization."

Lemieux also said that players who do not perform for the rest of the season will not have jobs in Pittsburgh next season.

"That's what they're fighting for right now, for jobs for next year, and I hope these guys understand that," Lemieux said.

"I think our pace count might be just a tad bit off."



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By Kevin Kilgore

Laugh Support